LABOUR MONTHLY

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WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

by WILLIAM GALLACHER, M.P.

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R.P.D. (Notes of the Month)

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and

THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY

MICHAEL CARRITT

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THREE REASONS

"Your magazine is ever interesting, and useful to understand what is going on in Britain and for that reason I would not like to miss it." (Reader in Canada.)

"I look forward to the L.M. each month for the information, the inspiration and the guidance it gives in the very complicated times before us." (Reader in Sussex.)

"The LABOUR MONTHLY is of inestimable value out here and is most useful as a means of keeping in touch with world affairs." (Reader in India.).

Three readers, from three different places, with three different reasons for reading the L.M. One because it tells him what is happening in Britain, one because of the guidance it gives on the problems in the present post-war situation, and one because it keeps him in touch with world affairs. Yet we would say that there is one thing in common—they feel they must have the LABOUR MONTHLY. Our intention, however, is that not only shall they continue to have the L.M., but they shall have the improved post-war L.M. of a far more comprehensive character: but this depends, in the main, on the measure of the financial support which our readers give us. Much as we appreciate the excellent response from many of our readers, WE STILL HAVE NOT AVERAGED THE NECESSARY £100 PER MONTH.

If we may conclude with an extract from yet another letter sent from the Middle East: "The LABOUR MONTHLY seems to improve continuously from month to month—it would be difficult now to do without it and I hope that now the Election is over that the Fund will rise well above the £100 mark, instead of being so long below the danger line."

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

Communist Congress

ON November 24 the Communist Party Congress meets. This will be the first peacetime Congress of the Communist Party since that Congress of September, 1938, which first, before all other political parties, exposed Munich, not with wisdom after the event, but at the very moment of Munich, and even on the eve of the betrayal, exposing with unerring precision where the path of that betrayal would lead to isolationist war for Britain. Since then the full storm-tide of war has swept over and transformed the world. The isolationist war against which the Communist Party warned handed over two-thirds of Europe to fascism and brought the uttermost hour of peril to Britain. But the alliance for which the Communist Party had so long fought alone finally triumphed and saved mankind from fascist death. Now the old intriguers, the cartel-partners of German reaction, the advocates of the Western Bloc (or Munich in a new dress), the anti-communist and anti-Soviet inciters, seek to creep out of their holes and undo the victory which has been won with the blood of millions. But their aims will not be so easily achieved. Years of common battle against fascism will not be so easily wiped out. The old political landmarks have vanished. The peoples are on the move. Toryism has received its electoral condemnation at the hands of the British people. New Governments have come to power. Communism has enormously gained in strength over the world. Communism faces the future full of confidence, aware of all the rocks and perils which still beset the course, but with clear and conscious aim to chart the course forward in the new conditions after military victory over fascism.

New Problems

It is no matter for surprise or disheartenment that in the first onset of the transition from war to peace all the new problems, the latent antagonisms and contradictions which had been partially held in check under the iron pressure of war, should burst out into the open with extreme harshness. The breakdown of the London Conference; the abrupt end of Lend-Lease and the Anglo-American negotiations; demobilisation and the transfer in industry; the national risings in Indonesia and Indo-china; the question of Britain's economic future; wage policy and the dock strike—all these acutely express from varying angles the nature of the problems confronting the Government and the people of this country. Any illusions that the electoral defeat of Toryism and return of a Labour majority would open a smooth path leading straight to the millennium, if such illusions were ever held in any quarters save according to the imaginative fictions of Tory scribes, have been speedily dispelled. The battle of the people did not end on VE Day or VJ Day or July 26; it has merely changed its form. The fight to win the peace, both for the world and for Britain, is in full swing; and it will require all the vigilance, initiative, political insight, unity and determined activity of the working-class movement and democratic opinion to win it.

No Ready-made Solution

Most of these pressing immediate problems, which now force themselves to the forefront of attention, played little part in the generalised programmes of the electoral controversy. They do not admit of any ready-made formula for their solution. No precise answers are to be found in "Let Us Face the Future" (or, where precise answers were sometimes attempted,

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with little thought for the full issues involved, as over Palestine, they prove today more of an embarrassment than a help). Hence the stormy eruption of these current problems, crowding the broad legislative aims of the Government's programme, has led to a certain sense of bewilderment and uncertainty of orientation among some sections of the labour movement.

Fresh Approach Essential

This temporary uncertainty in the face of immediate practical issues is the inevitable consequence of the old-style type of propaganda which presented a simple perspective that one day the people would awaken, return a labour majority to parliament, and thereafter the new Government would pass law after law until in course of time the socialist goal would be achieved. Reality does not work out in this simplified fashion. The contours of the class struggle cannot be so easily evaded. The present thorny problems, national and international, are the expression of the present stage of economic, social and political forces. The labour movement, in order to solve them, and not succumb to them as in 1931, or fall a victim to routine capitalist solutions and continuity of policy, requires a corresponding social and political theory which is able to build on objective realities from the standpoint of the interests of the working-class and of the aims of socialism, from the standpoint of the democratic creative forces of society. That is why, in the present complex situation, the guidance of Marxism is more than ever essential. In the first flush of the Labour Party's electoral victory, there were those who declared that Communism was proved superfluous. On the contrary. In the coming period Communism, which already in the whole preceding period has proved, alongside mistakes of detail, a hundred times closer and more correct in judgment of the broad lines of development of our era and its issues than any other school of thought, will have more than ever its indispensable contribution to make in the solution of the common problems of the labour movement.

Lessons of Twenty-eight Years

Before coming to the immediate current problems of Britain's position in the post-war world, it will be well to recall for a moment the significance of the anniversary which falls this month —the twenty-eighth anniversary of Soviet Power. Every year that passes confirms with renewed force the correctness of that path along which the Russian working-class and people, led by their Communist Party, have pioneered the way for the world. Along that path, and along no other, Socialism in our time has been achieved. Every other proffered path during these twenty-eight years has proved a mirage, leading to economic crisis, reaction and fascist barbarism. More. This lesson has been deepened in these recent years. The strength of the socialist society thus created proved the decisive force which at heavy cost broke fascism, and thus saved the Western world from the monstrous horror which its bankruptcy had engendered. This central fact of our time is worth bearing in mind at a moment when the dogs of reaction seek to return to their vomit, sing the praises anew of a supposed peculiar "Western civilisation" (*i.e.*, capitalist decay—for all the living creative values of the old Western European culture have long passed into the inheritance of world socialism), and on this basis peddle again their plans for Western reactionary blocs and spread their anti-Soviet poison and incitement, which prepared the last war. The years between the two wars showed where that path leads. The peoples of Europe will not wish to tread that path again.

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Lest We Forget

When the customary habit of self-glorification is being so freely indulged in by the millionaire press of this country, as a kind of moral consolation for the actual weakened world position of British imperialism (the true record of the fortitude and anti-fascist constancy of the masses of the British people, despite the faults of policy of their rulers, needs no boasting), it is well to recall for our chastening that, as the Halder and Keitel testimony has now further revealed, it was Britain's policy which made possible Hitler's war on the world, broke the front which could have checked him when Germany was militarily unprepared, wrecked the Soviet proposals for joint resistance, and even saved Hitler from destruction by the internal opposition in Germany. When the bill had to be paid in human lives and devastation, it was the European peoples, and above all the Soviet Union, which bore no share in the responsibility, that had to pay heaviest. It is not surprising that they should be concerned to see that that bill is not incurred again through our neglect and tolerance of reactionary policies.

Balance Sheet

In the Anglo-American economic negotiations the British negotiators have drawn up an elaborate table of British and American casualties to show the heavier proportion of British casualties in relation to population. They have weighed in their careful scales the one-third of a million dead of the British Empire and the one-quarter of a million dead of the United States. Fortunately for them, the Soviet Union authorities have not chosen to enter into this competition of the commercial calculators, who so nicely weigh up the value of a human life against dollars and sterling. If they should, the mouths of the Anglo-American commercial calculators would be for ever closed in shame. The overwhelming majority of the Allied dead, killed in the common cause, are Soviet dead. The full and terrible toll of millions, the flower of the first socialist generation in human history, sacrificed because of the foulness and barbarism of capitalist decay in the West and because we of the left in the West were yet too weak to control our rulers or check the evil—that full toll has still to be announced to the world. The overwhelming majority of the seven and a half millions of the Nazi German armed forces killed and permanently disabled (three times the level of the first world war) were put out of action by Soviet arms—thereby making possible a different future for the world. These are facts we cannot afford to forget.

Never Again

We of the West owe here a debt which we can never repay. But we can at least, if not repay it, at any rate serve our own interests by approaching with fuller understanding and co-operation the inflexible determination of the resistance movements of Europe and of the Soviet people to see that the roots of fascism in Europe shall be permanently destroyed, that German imperialism and domination of Europe shall not be allowed to be revived, and that the anti-fascist liberation which has been won with so much blood shall be made real and lasting. Firm principles and decisions for these aims have been reached in the Berlin Agreement. We have to see that these decisions are fulfilled. It must be a matter of deep concern to us that too often, in the practical operation of these decisions, the Soviet representatives should appear to be left isolated in their herculean efforts to grapple with the task of destroying the roots of fascism in Europe and liberating the anti-fascist forces, but that reactionary British, American and French representatives, entirely contrary to the feeling of their peoples, should appear again and

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again to intervene only to thwart these efforts, put back the near-fascists or fascists and quislings in places of authority, humiliate and hamstring the anti-fascist forces, or allow the commercial agents of Western monopoly interests to link up with German monopoly interests in order to revive the economic structure of German monopoly capitalism. It is all the worse when these reactionary policies are put forward in the name of spurious arguments of "humanitarian" considerations, or "economic" necessity, or hypocritical "democracy," or old-style "balance of power" calculations (to "check Russian influence," etc.).

Who Are Our Friends?

Independent testimony may be quoted of the impression of a moderate conservative witness, the Moscow correspondent of the *Observer*, Miss Iris Morley, writing in *Time and Tide* of September 29:—

> When we can show the peoples of Eastern Europe that our system can produce economic reforms as great as those achieved by the Governments of Bierut and Tito, that we can plan our economy more efficiently than the Soviet Union plans hers, then we may hope to regain our old supremacy. But until we do, the peoples of Eastern Europe are going to regard our kind of democracy with suspicion—as a word, not a reality—and our only friends in these countries will be the kind we least desire—namely, the dispossessed members of the upper class who look to us for the restoration of capitalism.

It should obviously be the concern of a Labour Government to see that Britain's role in Europe is not thus regarded as the main hope and sheet-anchor of all the reactionary upper-class elements whose privileges are threatened by the anti-fascist tide.

London Conference Deadlock

It is against this background that we need to understand the dangerous situation revealed in the London Conference deadlock. What is here involved is no mere detail of diplomatic procedure, but graver issues for the future of Britain's policy and of effective co-operation of the United Nations. It must inevitably be a matter of concern to labour and progressive opinion, and a source of satisfaction only to those Tory scribes who openly beforehand made incitements for such an outcome (with their appeals to Mr. Bevin to be "tough" with the Soviet Union and promises of Tory support) that the first international conference opened since the formation of the Labour Government should reveal a setback in Anglo-Soviet understanding. It is no less naturally a matter of concern that, in the event of diplomatic difficulties arising in these negotiations of the representatives of two capitalist States and a socialist State, the Labour spokesman should appear to be always and almost ostentatiously ranged with the millionaires' representative against the socialist representative, while the most shameful campaign of unrestrained attacks against the socialist State should be waged by the Labour Party organ. But it is necessary to endeavour to disentangle the issues involved in this dubious and unsatisfactory alignment, which was further illustrated when Mr. Bevin's statement on the London Conference was received with applause from the Tory benches and a noticeable silence from Labour benches.

Procedure and Practice

The immediate deadlock turned on procedure, but obviously involved wider issues. When it was pointed out on behalf of the Soviet Government that the Council of Foreign Ministers had made "a mistake," that is, had travelled outside its powers and instructions in violating the very clear written terms of the Berlin Agreement, and that such violation could consequently not be recognised and could have no place in the record, but that

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this necessary correction need not prevent the recording of the measure of agreement reached, it is clear that this manifestly correct formal point involved more than a formal point of procedure. Indeed, the obstinate resistance to what could have been easily and sensibly settled on this basis no less inescapably pointed to the deeper issues involved. The major issues involved were twofold. First, the strict maintenance and fulfilment of the Berlin Agreement—the keystone of the arch for the anti-fascist settlement of Europe, and above all, for the firm and democratic settlement of the German question, which remains the central question for the future of Europe. Second, the maintenance of the close co-operation and leading partnership of the three decisive Powers, Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States, carried forward from Teheran, Crimea and Berlin into the peace—as the keystone of leadership against international anarchy, for a durable world peace settlement, for the effective functioning of the United Nations, and for the future of international co-operation. Both these governing principles of the peace were being nibbled at and undermined in the London proceedings. Hence the necessity to call a halt and compel the issue to be squarely faced.

Whither Britain?

We should not take too tragic a view of the immediate deadlock, which can and will be solved. The logic of necessity compels present co-operation despite the divergences that exist. But there is all the difference in the world between an uneasy co-operation which thinly covers increasing friction and antagonism in every sphere and can even become the fragile shell incubating future conflict, and that close and full co-operation on the basis of a common practical programme envisaged at Teheran, Crimea and Berlin, which it is the vital interest of the democratic nations to achieve. Above all, it is the interest of Britain to achieve such co-operation; for Britain is in a relatively weaker position than either the United States or the Soviet Union to face the consequences of any isolationist policy. The warning note of Stalin's interview to Senator Pepper, as reported by the latter on October 1, deserves to be borne in mind:—

> "I asked him if he believed that the United States and Russia, acting together, could to a large extent keep peace in the world. He replied that he thought we could."

It is therefore all the more necessary, before more dangerous steps are taken, to place squarely the question: Where is Britain's policy leading? What is the Labour Government's conception of British foreign policy?

Balance of Power or International Co-operation?

Much paper and ink has been split since the London deadlock, as at the time of Munich, on the "enigma" of Soviet policy. British publicists would do well to look closer at home for the key to the problem which now acutely faces Britain. There is no "enigma" of Soviet policy; it is very clearly proclaimed in public pronouncements and practical action; it conforms to the firm decisions of the Moscow, Teheran, Crimea and Berlin Agreements; it holds out the hand of partnership for world peace along the lines of anti-fascist democratic co-operation and fidelity to agreements. But there is a sharp question in the international situation today with regard to Britain's policy, which is torn between conflicting currents. Will Britain pursue the path of international co-operation based on the responsible leadership of the three decisive Powers and close fulfilment of the Crimea and Berlin Agreements? Or will Britain sink back either to a client position of dependence on the United States or to

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the old traditional balance-of-power policies, seeking to build a Western power-bloc, and rebuilding German economic power, with anti-Soviet pin-pricks and friction, as in the inter-war years, but with a weaker hand, and leading to correspondingly fatal consequences?

Warning Memories

In this connection the experience after the last war is worth bearing in mind. After the last war Britain pursued a contradictory policy which subsequent history has by universal consent condemned. On the one hand, through the Versailles Treaty British imperialism sought to crush its hated German rival. On the other hand, almost before the ink was dry on that Treaty, British policy manoeuvred to undo its provisions, weaken France and the League of Nations, build up the economic power of Germany and finally even its armed power, until Germany within twenty years was able to resume the war of 1914 on a yet more formidable scale. Why this apparent madness of British policy? The apparent madness was in reality faithfully following all the accepted canons of classic British foreign policy, but in a new world where the old routine could no longer work so successfully.

Method in Madness

Britain's policy of strengthening German reaction in the inter-war years was not only governed by class considerations, the fear of a real democratic revolution or socialist revolution in Germany, which would have been decisive for the future of Europe, and consequent concern to buttress the reactionary forces in Germany. Such support of German reaction meant inevitably support of precisely those social forces, represented by the junkers, militarists and industrial magnates, which were the basis of German imperialism and its aggressive aims, ultimately threatening Britain.

But this policy of strengthening a reactionary Germany also reflected the traditional balance-of-power conception, to prevent the dominance of any single Power on the Continent of Europe. By this conception the enemy of yesterday, once defeated, requires immediately to be strengthened anew, while the ally of yesterday requires to be weakened. The former enemy becomes the ally; the former ally becomes the enemy.

Perfidious Albion

It is this tradition which has established the reputation of "perfidious Albion" in Europe. The fostering of a powerful reactionary Germany in the heart of Europe was directed, first against France, to weaken the French Versailles ascendancy in Europe, and second, against the Soviet Union. In the later stages, as Germany grew stronger, and as France was weakened and brought to increasing dependence on Britain, the aim was directed principally against the Soviet Union, and, to a lesser extent, as a counterweight against the United States. The aim was presented as that of building a Western European bloc under British leadership, representing the close interlocking and cartel partnership of the most powerful and reactionary sections of Anglo - French - German heavy industry and finance.

Pedigree of the Western Bloc

This aim of a strengthened Germany under British patronage, and a Western European bloc led by Britain, and excluding the Soviet Union, is the consistent red thread running through all the turns and manoeuvres of British foreign policy in the years between the wars. It found expression in the Locarno Pact of 1925, when Austen Chamberlain, Stresemann, Briand and Mussolini clinked glasses for the victory of what they termed their "Fourth International," and a British Cabinet Minister proclaimed

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the principle of the "solidarity of Western Christian civilisation" against the "sinister menace" in Eastern Europe. It was renewed as soon as Hitler came to power in 1933, when the British Prime Minister, MacDonald, hastened to Berlin and Rome, called for the doubling of the German army, and initialled the Four-Power Pact of Britain, France, Hitler-Germany and Mussolini-Italy. It reached its climax in the Four Power Pact of Munich in 1938, between the Britain of Neville Chamberlain, the France of Daladier, the Germany of Hitler and the Italy of Mussolini. 1925-1933-1938. A long enough pedigree for the Western Bloc, which is now so naively peddled as a wonderful new idea. Only when this entire strategy had resulted in catastrophe, British policy turned under the compulsion of necessity to the alternative path of the democratic alliance for the defeat of German imperialism. But as soon as the victory has been won, the old forces seek to reassert themselves and revive the old line of policy. This time there is no excuse for failing to understand where this line leads.

Rebuilding German Imperialism ?

Powerful reactionary voices, representing the monopolist interests closely linked with the German monopolists, denounce the Berlin Agreement and demand the speedy economic revival of German heavy industry. The central immediate battleground of this fight turns on the future of the Ruhr—that dynamo in the heart of Europe whose expansive thrust has underlain the aggressive policies of German imperialism. *The Economist* says that the basis of heavy industry in the Ruhr is far from shattered, estimates the present physical capacity for steel production at 8 million tons or half pre-war, which can be rapidly raised to 11 million tons (or more than the total British steel production in 1938), and further discloses that in the current negotiations Britain has proposed a German steel quota of 11 million tons, the United States 9 million tons, and the Soviet Union (in accordance with the Berlin Agreement for the reduction of German heavy industry to minimum peacetime needs and dismantling of the surplus in order to establish a better economic balance over Europe) 3 million tons. *The Economist*, in the intervals of denouncing the Berlin Agreement as "Hitlerian" and fulminating against Soviet policy, demands that Britain, "in absolute control of the Ruhr" and Western Germany, should pursue a unilateral policy to build up German heavy industry and ignore Soviet opposition. Thus, while in Eastern Germany the Junkers' estates are divided, the monopolist control of heavy industry broken, the Nazis displaced, and working-class and democratic organisation encouraged, in the Western zone it is proposed to rebuild monopolist heavy industry in alliance with Anglo-French capital, the former Nazi economic councils in practice continue to function, and working-class and democratic organisation has to struggle to operate under a straitjacket.

Illusions on the Left

This reactionary policy is at present being actively sold to the Left in the name of "humanitarian" considerations for the welfare of the German people and for the economic reconstruction of Western Europe. The *New Statesman and Nation* speaks of "the Occidental belief that human beings matter" (*i.e.*, translating geographical mysticism into concrete social-political terms, "the capitalist imperialist belief that human beings matter," as opposed to the notorious socialist belief that they do not) and on this basis proposes a "Western Union" to "continue the traditions of our own humanitarian democracy." André Philip, spokesman of the French

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Socialist Party, made clearer the meaning of this "humanitarian democracy" when he spoke of a "Western bloc" to include "the colonial empires of France, Belgium and the Netherlands." By this time the geographical mysticism of "the West" has become very thin, the hard social-political meaning very clear. What is proposed is a bloc of the main colony-owning imperialist Powers, a bloc of the Old Imperialism, now on the defensive in the face of the advance of the peoples all over the world, as against the formal anti-colonial professions of the stronger imperialism of the United States, on the one hand, and the Soviet Union, on the other, with its socialist and democratic principles which exclude the colonial system. The practical meaning of this "Western Christian solidarity" of "humanitarian democracy" has found its revealing expression in the Pacific, in the use of Japanese armed forces to fire on the national liberation movements in Java and Indochina for the maintenance of the Anglo-Dutch-French colonial system.

Fatal Contradictions

If this entire line of policy, of rebuilding German economic power and seeking to draw together on this basis a Western bloc under British leadership, proved already bankrupt and suicidal in the period 1918-39, it is a hundred times more so today. For the contradictions are now a hundred times greater, and Britain's strength is less. Even the secondary contradictions of British and French interests are not yet solved; just as they showed themselves over the Ruhr and Syria after the last war, they are showing themselves over the Ruhr and Syria today. The peoples of Europe, having gone through the fires of fascism and fought for their freedom, are little disposed to become the pawns of British reaction. The old reactionary parties and leaders, on whom the traditional British policy has been accustomed to build, are tarred with the brush of collaboration with Hitler; new forces have come to the front, and Communism in the first place, as the French elections have shown. The Soviet Union is enormously stronger, not merely in direct power, but in its moral and political influence, on the basis of its consistent upholding of the anti-fascist liberation principles of the United Nations programme. Finally, United States policy looks with no favourable eye on the project of a Western bloc or revival of the Anglo-German cartel alliance, and American Government spokesmen have made declarations hostile to both.

Anglo-American Negotiations

It would, indeed, be a fatally foolish policy for Britain which should simultaneously lead to a weakening of Anglo-Soviet relations and of relations with the new democratic Governments in Europe, and to a sharpening of Anglo-American relations. Yet the London Conference deadlock has been accompanied by a critical stage in the Anglo-American economic negotiations. Nor are the two unconnected. It is obvious that Britain, on a basis of full and cordial understanding with the Soviet Union and the new Europe, would be in a stronger position to negotiate favourably with the United States; just as, conversely, it might be argued that, from an unscrupulous point of view, it would be in the interest of a self-seeking American policy to foster and encourage Anglo-Soviet divergences. The development of the Anglo-American economic negotiations is not yet the subject of official report. It is of vital importance for progressive interests on both sides to reach a positive constructive outcome, permitting of an expansionist economic policy of world development and modifying, so far as possible, the threatened trade war. In this connection it is important to bear in mind

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that, while the United States has ratified the Bretton Woods Agreement, the British Government has not yet brought it before parliament for ratification.

Britain in the New World

Wherever we turn, one conclusion is paramount. Britain's changed position in the new world relations after the war requires a fresh approach to all questions of policy, both in the economic and political field. The interests of progressive development in Britain, and of that social reconstruction for which the people demonstrated their demand by their electoral vote, require a policy of international co-operation in close association with the democratic forces of the world. Such international co-operation must and can only be based on the closest association and leadership of the three main Powers, Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. This central pivot of policy, vital for world peace and for the interests of all nations, great and small, is above all indispensable for Britain. Whatever runs counter to this runs counter to the interests of the British people.

Labour's Responsibility

We stand on the eve of a new era, when the decisions taken in making the peace and in the basic questions of Britain's world policy will govern the future for many years. A reactionary international policy can wreck the aims of social and economic advance at home. If we travel away from the aims of the Crimea and Berlin programme on the basis of anti-fascist democratic co-operation, and choose instead the path of manoeuvring with anti-democratic elements abroad, building of sectional power-blocs, intensified trade war, wars of colonial suppression, and minor wars leading eventually to renewed world war, we would be destroying all prospect of social reconstruction and raising of standards at home. The alternative path is open; but it will require an energetic fight against all reactionary policies to ensure it. It is here that arises the special responsibility of the entire labour movement, which can decisively influence the policy of the Government. The problems before the British people today are many and complex, both at home and abroad. There is still much ground to be cleared, in hammering out a common policy. Every section of the movement can help in this common task. It will be the aim of the coming Communist Congress to make its contribution to this common task, in indicating its view of the answers to the new questions now before the working-class and the people of this country, both in the sphere of international policy and home policy, in the conversion from war to peace, in the relations of the labour movement and the Labour Government, and in the strengthening and promotion of unity of the labour movement.

R. P. D.

October 22, 1945.

NOTE TO READERS

There was an exceptionally heavy demand for the October LABOUR MONTHLY. As the ordinary demand far exceeds the possible supply owing to the restrictions made by the Paper Control, this additional demand may have caused many of our regular readers to have missed their copies. Any readers in this position can avoid this in future by taking out a postal subscription for the LABOUR MONTHLY. Rates :—

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The Twenty-Eighth Anniversary

by THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY

IN three months I believe I saw more of the Soviet Union than many journalists are permitted to see in three years. I needed but to ask, and every facility was afforded to see what I sought.

And I sought and saw much. I went to Moscow; to Leningrad in the North, to Stalingrad in the South; then down to Armenia and Georgia, beyond the Caucasus; and after that to Uzbekistan in Central Asia.

I examined the damage done by the fascists: it was colossal, beyond compute, terrible. If Russia seeks super-security we must remember what she has suffered.

I examined her efforts at restoration. These were equally striking. With tremendous energy men and women repaired cities and reconstructed social life. I never saw work so hard, so eager, so hopeful. They know, in the Soviet Union, what they are working for and who they are working for. Their work benefits themselves, their neighbours and their country equally and simultaneously.

I examined the type of youth the Soviet regime produces: I mingled much with young men and women of twenty to thirty years of age, children of the new Soviet order. They fill me with hope and confidence. In ability, in training, in skill and in character they are equal to the world's best: they are creative and likeable.

I examined the quality of the young Republics who make up the Soviet Union—Armenia, Georgia and Ubekistan. It is impossible to speak too highly of the gigantic progress made in these lands in the last twenty years.

Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, was a city of 27,000 twenty years ago; a city of mudroofed houses, cobbled streets and rampant disease. Today it is a magnificent city of finely-planned streets and parks and public buildings: the new Opera House would grace any city. Its plan for 150,000 inhabitants has long become out of date and the present plan is for 450,000.

Armenian culture is now of a high order. I saw opera in Yerevan which would rejoice London theatregoers and the children's orchestra and solo players would raise a storm in any London audience.

It was the same in Asia. Tashkent is one of the most beautiful cities I ever visited. The cotton mills of Tashkent have nothing to learn from Manchester or the U.S.A. and their surroundings of gardens and green lanes between shop and shop, are a model of planned amenity for the worker's life.

The scientific agricultural station at Tashkent produces new types of cotton. Coloured cotton, brown, grey, green, is already grown and the need for dyeing departs. Cotton, the texture of wool, is another product of this new station.

I examined the religious situation in the Soviet Union. I visited the head of the Orthodox Russian Church, the Armenian and Georgian churches, the head of the Baptists and the head of the Jewish community and also the head of the Moslem world. One and all now work in harmony with the State and express gratitude for what the State has done. In Stalin's own words to me: the church has seen how patriotic the State is and the State has seen how patriotic the church is.

Difficulties abound. Many things could be better done in Russia, as in any other land. Russia needs to learn much from us, as we from her. But the step that Russia has taken has been a forward step and a colossal step and one which has lifted the human race a long way onwards towards a new and nobler order. British-Soviet unity is a matter of paramount importance.

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What is Democracy?

by WILLIAM GALLACHER, M.P.

DEMOCRACY, Democracy, what is Democracy? Never was there such a clamour, never so many of our bright lads ready to take sides, never such a consensus of opinion, if we take the British press for our guide, that we are blessed above all other countries, that we alone have democracy of the highest possible standard, while other more unfortunate nations grope about in the dark, unable to achieve our heavenly measure of enlightenment. Pardon. I forgot America. There also there is democracy, almost comparable with ours. But however much the "bright lads" talk, not one of them ever feels capable of telling us what they mean by democracy. True, when they are driven to the wall, they can always be relied on to jump back to the Gettysburg speech of Abraham Lincoln and give us his famous phrase "Government of the people, for the people, by the people." That's about all we've ever got by way of definition. What is it worth? It's not worth a damn. It means nothing and explains nothing. But it sounds nice and as our "intellectuals" are always more concerned with "sound" than they are with "content," it has been lapped up as the final word on the vexed question of democracy. There never has been, and never will be, Government "for the people." There always has been, and always will be (while there are governments) Government in the interest of certain people, against the interest of other people. Take America, "The" great democracy. Is there anyone crazy enough to say that the Government there is a government "for the people" whether that government be Democratic or Republican?

The American "people" is composed of great monopoly capitalists, plantation-owners, grafters and crooks of all descriptions, all of whom live at the expense and on the labour of great masses of workers and professional people. Amongst these are millions of "foreign-born" workers, who are particularly subjected to exploitation. Even more so are the negroes and poor whites in the Southern States of the Union.

Is the American Government, Democratic or Republican, "for" those masses of workers? Far from it. It is "for" Private Enterprise, in other words, it is a government for the big financiers, whose job is to keep the masses in order, either by brute force or by concession, whichever is most in accord with the interest of the big financiers.

Of course there can be opposing interests amongst this ruling clique and out of this opposition there may be certain advantages to be obtained by the masses, but these must always be in the nature of things, limited. The Government is a government for the ruling cliques.

Let us come back home and see what goes on. Would anyone say that a Tory Government is a government "for the people"? Liberal and Labour leaders have for long enough impressed us with the fact, that a Tory Government is a government of vested interest.

There again we must ask the question, What is the British people? It is made up of Tory landowners, Tory financiers, crooks and quacks of all descriptions and masses of workers and professional people on whom they batten, like limpets to a rock.

Here let me digress for a moment. Professional people are often deluded into the belief that their interests are somehow or another tied up with the

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Tory landowners and financiers. It is all wrong. An advancing working-class represents an advancing civilisation and that means an ever-widening sphere of activity for all professions. So always if I speak of the workers I include along with them those who should be their allies in the search for "new horizons."

To get back to the Tories. A Tory government is a government for the Tory landowners and Tory financiers and only incidentally concerns itself with the welfare of the masses. That concern may take the form of drastic repression or the form of a mild concession, but always with a view to protecting the present structure of society, the maintenance of the Tory landowners and the Tory financiers. Just try to imagine a Tory government coming out to the country and gathering the trade unions and the masses of workers behind it for an assault on the landowners and the financiers—well, we'd have to have strange powers of imagery. A Tory government is not "for the people," it is for the parasitic few and against the exploited many.

But now we have a Labour Government, is it "for the people"? Well, I hope not. I want to see it acting for the great majority of the people, against the parasitic few. In other words, if the Labour Government is going to do its job, as it should be done, it will be "for the workers" and against the landowners and financiers. It cannot be for both. If it doesn't face up to that it will fail and failure would be a disaster. Not government "for the people," but government for a class against the enemies of that class. In the Soviet Union, whose democracy our pundits so volubly criticise, there is government "for the great mass of the people," workers, collective farmers, and professional people, all united, against the remnants of Czarism, the remnants of Kulakism, saboteurs, wreckers and agents of outside capitalism.

Government of a class, against another class, that is the function of Government, the function of the State. A study of Marx and Lenin would make that clear to the most reluctant. Alas, they will not make the study.

What, then, is democracy? I will hazard a definition of what is generally meant when we discuss it.

Democracy is majority decision, arrived at by men and women who stand in an equal relation one to the other.

The Party System

Now take that definition and jump across to America again. Mr. Byrnes, the Secretary of State, has recently been lamenting the absence of democracy in certain of the Balkan countries. It saddens Mr. Byrnes to think of it. But it doesn't worry Mr. Byrnes, in his own State of South Carolina the "poor whites" and the negroes are deprived of the right to vote by the poll-tax, which they are quite unable to pay. In those cases where the negroes are able to pay the poll-tax, they would take a great risk going to the ballot stations. Is there anyone would dream of saying that the negro in South Carolina stands in anything like equal relationship to Mr. Byrnes? Or that any ordinary worker in any American city stands on an equal relationship to a big monopoly capitalist with all his control over the press, the radio and the pulpit? What a foundation on which to build democracy! And it is the same over here. Take the miners labouring long hours every day down in the bowels of the earth, getting home tired and weary and compare him with the man who controls millions and through these millions buys up all kinds of propaganda and educational agencies; is it

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possible to say that they stand in equal relationship to one another? Or take the agricultural labourer and compare his position with that of the Squire or the Bishop of the English Church. The relationship between these makes democracy, in any real sense, impossible.

But then we have the party system and that helps to equalise things. Maybe so, but the party system is in itself an admission of the faulty character of our democracy, even while it serves to maintain its worst features. For never let us forget, we have had the party system in this country, for, at least, three centuries and it has, so far, kept the landowners and parasites generally well on the top, while the masses have struggled, generation after generation, to keep body and soul together, down at the bottom.

In America the party system has been eminently successful. So successful that in "democratic America" there are no representatives of the workers in the Congress or the Senate. No wonder Byrnes looks askance at the Balkans.

But after all our party system, which we are so anxious to impose on other people (we would even like Russia to adopt it) is a reflection of our social system.

In the earlier days of Parliament there were no parties, only members controlled by the King's Ministers. But then there were no great differences between those who were qualified to be elected. Gradually the opposition of the city merchants to the privileges of the aristocracy began to assert itself. It took on, at first, a religious character, for the robbers, on whatever side they may be, must always have a religious sanction. The fight, therefore, gathered around the "Exclusion Bill." This was for the exclusion of James, who was an avowed Catholic, as successor to his brother Charles II. It was around this issue in 1680 that the division took on the character of Whigs and Tories and the party system came into being.

During the nineteenth century we had the great period of enlightenment, when liberalism became the watchword of the industrialists. They were the great protagonists of "freedom." Freedom to trade, freedom to employ the landless proletarians when and under what conditions they cared to impose and in line with that freedom for every man to go to hell by whichever way he chose. It was a great party, the Liberal party. But even as it prospered, it was moving to its inevitable end. More and more as industry grew and concentrated the powerful capitalists made their peace and joined their families with the aristocracy. They had no further need for liberalism. At the same time as this decaying process was going on, a new party was rising—a party based on the organised working-class—the labour party.

Now the Liberal Party has gone, never to return, and the stage is held by Labour and Tory. What do they represent? They represent a society with landowners, capitalists and workers. But suppose the Labour Party succeeded in realising its ultimate goal, what then? No landowners, no capitalists, would mean no party of the landowners and capitalists. That would leave only one party, a party of the workers. True it is, that at the present moment the working-class movement is not united. But we all want it united. We are only not agreed on the method. The Communists want affiliation, the labour leaders want unity through liquidation of the Communist Party. We are all, ostensibly at any rate, for unity. Sooner or later we'll achieve it. If we get unity, one party for the workers and professional people, and then put the landlords and capitalists out of business, we'll be left with one party and it would be

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childish nonsense to look around for another, just for the sake of having two. It would be madness in particular to encourage the existence of a party that aimed at sabotaging our socialist state for the purpose of restoring landlordism and capitalism again. Yet this is what we are trying to force on Poland and the Balkan countries. In these countries capitalism was not highly developed. The big landowners all had their sons in the Officers Corps of the armies and through these imposed their will upon the masses. The Government was their Government, the Army was their Army. Now they have gone. Their estates are divided up amongst the peasants. The various groupings who fought against the Germans remain united to hold and keep their gains. They have put forward agreed upon lists of candidates, "It's not right," our pundits shout, "it's not democracy, you must give the landowners a chance to get back on top again." That's how the Foreign Office sees it. That's how it decides its policy. Was it because Leeper the Ambassador and General Scobie were such devotees of democracy that British tanks and British lives were put at the disposal of the landowners of Greece, and used against the E.A.M.?

Here in this country, democracy carries with it the landowners and the capitalists and what's good enough for us ought to be good enough for the Balkans. If there isn't a party of reaction, then there isn't democracy; that's our story and we stick to it; and if these fellows in the Balkans won't listen to it, then we'll hammer it into them with tanks, bombs and bayonets.

But at this point, just a thought. There is democracy, very much so, in the trades unions of this country and in the great Co-operative movement. Democracy in the sense of which we always speak of it, where majority decisions are made and operated by men and women who stand in equal relation one to another and there is no "party system" to make it work. The "party system" is no part of democracy. It is, as I have already made clear, a reflection of the character of our society; and with a change in society, the form of democracy will change. Instead of objecting to the "one party" method in other countries, we should be working towards the "one party" method here. In other words, to the end of landlordism and capitalism and the realisation of our socialist goal.

Talk Unlimited

One of the arguments put up for our form of democracy is especially peculiar. The All-Union Soviet Parliament meets only periodically, sits for a few days, does its business and departs, each of its members going back to work in his area. What a contrast with our Parliament, which, apart from frequent recesses, is always sitting and always talking.

Even a careful writer, like A. J. Cummings, can say in the *News-Chronicle* (October 2, 1945): "We are pretty certain ours, with all its defects, is the better one. Let it end there." No, I don't think we'll let it end there. I think we'll just begin. Our method of government is not designed to get things done, but to prevent things from being done. Is that a desirable method of government? Of course, there's talk, plenty of it and it's called "democratic discussions." But what is it all about? Take the Catering Bill for a start. Here was a Bill, seeking to give the most elementary justice to a body of badly exploited men and women. It should have been passed in half an hour. In the Soviet Union, the subject matter of such a Bill would be discussed in the trade unions and co-operatives and

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general agreement arrived at. When it came before the Soviet Parliament, it would only have to be registered. Why? Because there are no landowners and capitalists there to block it with amendments. But in the British parliament, what happens? As soon as the Bill appears, the Tories interested in the catering trade get the lawyers on the job. Hundreds of amendments are put down. Every conceivable obstacle the vested interests can find is placed in the way. Days and weeks of talk inside the House, with interminable squabbles outside, before such a small and insignificant measure can be got through the House of Commons. But it latterly got through. Now consider the claims of the old age pensioners. For over ten years they have been making a campaign for 30s. per week without a means test. Time and time again it has been raised in the House. Joe Tinker, with the backing of quite a number of us, raised it in season and out. Any god's amount of talk, but no justice for the old age pensioners. The job, after ten years, still remains to be done, although every democratic organisation in the country is in support of the demand. It is our method of government that has held it back.

And then, consider the coal crisis. Shinwell has been handed a tough job; but he is a tough lad, and we will do all we can to help him through with it. But twenty-five years ago the Sankey Commission, by a majority, recommended nationalisation of the mines, as the only solution for the mining crisis: twenty-five years ago. Since then there has been discussion after discussion in the House of Commons on the question of mines. All the time the House of Commons was concerned with preventing the solution. While the House of Commons went on talking miners were being killed and maimed down the pits, strikes and lock-outs were bringing, time and again, starvation to the mining villages; and now after all this suffering, and after twenty-five years of quite unproductive talk, we are back to the Sankey proposal, nationalisation of the mines. No, I don't think that method of government can commend itself to those who are exploited, however desirable it may be to those who are exploiting. As a matter of fact, the situation has become so bad that the first action of the Labour Government was to propose a committee to examine into the procedure of the House of Commons and see if anything could be done to expedite its business. As things are, it's impossible to carry forward any wide range of important legislation. The Tories will do everything within their power to prevent any real speed up. When we get rid of the Tories, then, there will be less talk and more and quicker decisions. We also will be able to "register" what the democratic organisations have discussed and agreed on; and then get back to our districts.

Dictatorship and Democracy

Another matter that calls for consideration and one that has been the subject of endless confusion, is that of the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" —a phrase used by Marx to express the character of a situation that was bound to arise when the workers' State replaced the capitalist State. But those who refuse to study or understand Marx, and who therefore know little or nothing about the forces operating in society—to such, dictatorship is dictatorship and democracy is democracy and "never the twain shall meet." To these history has no meaning, nor has the actual class relations of a particular society. They see the surface appearance, they refuse to

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penetrate beneath it. Were they to examine present-day society in this country, it might strike them as strange, that their vaunted system of democracy is built on a foundation of class dictatorship, that is very real to those who suffer under it. Of course, for the "intellectual" who has never been inside of a factory, never been bullied or cursed at by a "gaffer" or manager, the dictatorship doesn't exist. But it's there. Shortly after the last war the A.E.U. had a terrific fight on its hands on the issue of "Managerial functions." The engineers were claiming a say in conditions in the factories. The employers denied their right to any say, and claimed for themselves all power to employ or dismiss and to govern the factory through their managers and foremen. No say of any kind for the masses of workers. After a long fight the A.E.U. was forced to submit and the dictatorship of the employers was accepted. During the recent war production at a higher rate than anything hitherto known was essential; and to get it, "Production Committees" were set up. These committees were of the greatest value for the nation, but were continually being sabotaged by employers, who feared their dictatorial powers were being jeopardised. Now the war is over these same employers want controls removed; want back their old powers complete. But leaving that, we will consider the question purely in relation to political democracy.

While it is true that there can be dictatorship, as was the case in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, or as in Franco Spain, with no element of democracy left, there have been continual instances of the two going together. Dictatorship, in the modern world, always expresses the will of a class, against the enemies of that class within and outside the country of its adoption. The circumstances determine the measure of democracy that will operate within the dictatorship.

No one would say, for instance, that democracy was unknown in this country till the Reform Act of 1832. Yet prior to that a very limited number of people in this country had a vote. There was democracy for the ruling clique. But the ruling clique, through a whole series of laws and subservient judges, kept a rigid dictatorship over the masses of the people. For a period even the ruling clique was divided. For over two centuries, from the time of Henry VIII till the Emancipation Act, there was a ruthless, savage dictatorship directed against the Catholics.

No Catholic could hold a public office or sit in our democratic parliament. For two centuries that went on, but for almost six centuries, while the "Mother of Parliaments" was nursing "democrats" of one kind and another, the iron hand of dictatorship was clamped down heavily on the people. Read the history of this country and see there how the dictatorship built up its powerful bulwark of defence (by democratic methods), holding off the masses from participation, until its defences were complete.

Or let us have another look at the United States of America. Where did the Democratic Party of America have its home, its stronghold? In the Slave States. Lincoln was the first President of the new party—the Republican party—and he represented the industrial North and Middle West against the "Democratic" slave-owners. In these Southern States, before the Civil War, there was a classic case of dictatorship and democracy. There was democracy for the aristocratic planters, from which the "poor whites" were excluded (what could "White Trash" know about affairs of State? What "rights" were they entitled to? None whatsoever). So there was there a rigid dictatorship over the poor whites, as well as slavery for the

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negroes, but all the democratic forms recognised and operated by and for the planters. Since the Civil War there has been little actual change. In some of these States the dictatorship is so rigid that only about seven to ten per cent. of the citizens are qualified to vote.

In the Soviet Union the Proletarian Dictatorship is directed against the enemies of the proletariat. Of course, there are those who foolishly talk about it being a dictatorship imposed on the proletariat. By whom? Oh, they will answer, the Communist Party. But the Communist Party is made up of proletarians, the great bulk of whom work in the mines, the mills and factories. It doesn't make sense. Dictatorship, let me say again, is used by a class against the enemies of that class. It may be used, as it has been used time and again, by the capitalists against the workers; it may be used as it is in the Soviet Union, against the internal and external enemies of the Soviet people. It cannot be used by people against themselves. It is possible for the capitalists to impose a dictatorship on the workers and operate democratic forms for themselves. So will the workers. They also, through a workers' State, may operate a dictatorship against their enemies while maintaining every form of democratic expression for themselves. That is the basic character of trade unionism. Democracy for its members, but its whole power used to impose the will of the members on their enemies the capitalists. Of course, trade union leaders will negotiate with the employers, because they do not feel strong enough to enforce their demands. But even in negotiation there is always the latent threat ; accept our terms or we close down your business.

When the movement is strong enough it will put the capitalists out of business altogether. Democracy and dictatorship, these are expressed in all our union activities. If we are strong enough, we will dictate our own terms to our enemies.

That is the case in the Soviet Union. The Soviet, or Workers Council, is the great contribution to progress made by the Russian workers. It is not some artificial piece of machinery invented by the Bolsheviks. It was the form of democratic expression organised by the workers in the Revolutionary struggle of 1905. It was their democratic method of organisation in 1917. It was the genius of Lenin that early enabled him to realise that something new had entered into the class struggle, that what Marx and Engels saw for the first time "as through a glass, darkly" had now become clear—the Democratic weapon that would impose the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and that would carry the Revolution to victory.

Democracy in the Labour Movement

In all countries, the big bourgeoisie have been prepared to use the strength of the people in order to force an accommodation with the aristocracy. In this country they said in effect: "Take us in along with you or we'll use the masses to destroy you." Having become part and parcel of the aristocracy, they had no more time for the workers other than to exploit them.

But some of the lower middle-class, always willing to learn from their "betters," took up where they left off. They saw the value of the masses as a threat to the new combination of aristocracy and finance. They sought ways and means of using it, and so the Fabian Society was born. Of course, the leading Fabians didn't declare this to be their business. For them to have come out and said, "We're going to use the masses, or at least the threat of the masses, to force the new combination to take us into the

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charmed circle'' would have been fatal. Yet Tawwny, in his book *The Acquisitive Society*, puts it almost as bluntly as that.

Shaw, Wells, Webb and Co. had a much better approach. They, out of their own heads, formulated a theory of socialism, of the most nebulous, but at the same time of the most attractive character. Shaw, who is an authority on big game hunting, explained it somewhat as follows: If you're going to cut the head off a tiger, don't approach it from the front. Take it in the rear. Speak soothing words to it and cut off its tail. It won't notice that. Keep up the process and you'll have its head off before it ever dreams you're attacking it. ''Aw,'' you say, ''nobody believes that.'' Well, I'll call David Kirkwood and Alex Sloan to witness, that one of the most popular Ministers in the Coalition Government, whenever anything came up affecting his department, always pleaded with us not to make a row in the House. ''I've got to the rear of the tiger,'' he would say, ''it doesn't know what I'm up to. But if you fellows start shouting, you'll startle it and give the whole game away.'' Yes, sir, the Fabians have a theory, ''the inevitability of gradualness,'' although a couple of world wars have knocked it somewhat cock-eyed. But the idea is to achieve socialism a little bit at a time, getting the capitalist class accustomed to it as you go along, and sooner or later, without trouble of any kind, we'll arrive at complete socialist society.

But as you can understand, this is a very delicate process and requires men with special aptitude to handle it. Rude, crude, brutal Marxists would never do for this. They'd spill the beans before the process got right started, and off would go the tiger. No, for this job the cultured intellectuals of the middle-class are necessary and these the Fabians propose to supply.

We cannot here discuss the history and development of the labour movement, but from early on, it came under the baneful influence of the Fabians.

In 1920 the Communist Party was founded. It had a hard fight against Fabianism in the labour movement. But however hard it was, we kept at it and would ultimately have beaten the Fabians, had they not taken drastic measures to stop our progress. They succeeded in getting a series of resolutions carried depriving us of all democratic rights within the Labour Party. The Labour Party has all along depended for its existence on the political levy paid by the trades unions. Every trade unionist who paid the political levy was, and is, a member of the Labour Party, and can participate in all conferences and activities of the Labour Party and be eligible as Labour Party candidate for local authorities or for parliament—all except the Communists — they are banned. No Communist can hold an official position in the Labour party, no Communist can be elected to Labour's ''annual parliament,'' the Labour Party Conference. They are in exactly the same position in the Labour Party as the Catholics once were in the country: yet Catholics, who consider that one of the greatest crimes in history was the banning of the Catholics between the time of Henry VIII and the Emancipation Bill, join with non-Catholics in the unholy task of depriving trade unionists who are Communists of their democratic rights within the labour movement. As a result of this ban, the success of the Fabians has been phenomenal.

The trade unions put up the money to keep the Labour Party going. They pay the piper, but the Fabians enjoy the music. Engineers, railwaymen, transport workers, miners, general

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workers, electricians, moulders, cotton-workers and all the rest of them "pay, pay, pay" and Hannen Swaffer tells us in the *Daily Herald* that 229 of the labour members of parliament are Fabians. Could there be a better system of democracy anywhere? The aristocracy is secure, the financiers are safe, the Fabians are sitting pretty. What more could anyone ask for, as long as the workers are prepared to carry the burden. If only Stalin and Tito and the peoples of the Balkans generally would understand democracy as we understand it, everybody would be happy—well, everybody that matters, that is. But somehow or another they won't be reasonable. They persist in a form of democracy that excludes aristocracy, financiers, and Fabians. A form of democracy that retains the power in the hands of the workers. Maybe one day soon the workers here will get tired of carrying all these others on their backs, then we also will have a new form of democracy. That day can't come too soon.

Democracy and the Press

In this country we have a free press. At least, we are always told so. In the Soviet Union the press isn't free, not, at any rate, in the sense that ours is. Just consider for a moment. In the Soviet Union there are thousands of daily papers, Government papers, party papers, trade union papers, Co-operative papers, young Communist papers and factory papers, as well as army and navy papers: plenty of them: discussing every question that affects the work and life of the people. Often these papers are extremely critical of the administration, in the factories, in the local or national Soviets. The late Marcus Samuel, who never missed a chance of getting an article published against the Soviet Union, always quoted at great length critical articles from Soviet newspapers in order to bolster up his attacks. In what sense are the Soviet papers not free? We'll understand that question better, if we ask in what sense our papers are free. Out of all the daily papers in this country (and there are hundreds of them) only one daily newspaper, the *Daily Worker*, doesn't belong to a capitalist undertaking. The main dailies belong to Lord Beaverbrook, Lord Kemsley, Lord Camrose, Lord Southwood or some other such well-known "democrat." But if the Tory landowners, the Tory financiers and, *ipso facto*, the Tory Party, were abolished, as we propose to abolish them, then who would run the press? Obviously, the Government, the party, the trades unions, co-operatives, etc., the same as in the Soviet Union.

But it's difficult, very difficult, to get people to grasp a simple proposition of that kind, especially when our "free" press is able to hire, at very high salaries, a whole host of subservient scribes. Added to these are the voluntary scribes, who tower high in the realm of intellect. Such a one is a lad named Bertrand Russell. He, if I may say so, is a bloke with a great mind. But to be quite frank, if it wasn't for the position I occupy and which I must try to live up to, I'd say he was just a damned blether. He writes to the Glasgow *Forward* to lament the fact that the Soviet people are kept in ignorance of what is going on outside the Soviet Union. If only they had a "free" press! If only Stalin and his associates would allow a few Grand Dukes to take over, what a difference it would make! The Grand Duke Mike with the *Express* in Moscow, the Grand Duke Nick with *The Times* in Leningrad, another for Kharkov, one for Kiev and a special Grand Duke for Stalingrad. All of them with estates and millions stolen from the workers,

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engaged in tearing the heart out of the Soviet system and advocating the return of Czarism, landlordism and capitalism, what a delight that would be to all the advocates of a "free" press controlled by and in the interests of the capitalists. And what a soothing picture for Bertrand Russell, Michael Foot and the rest of their tribe.

This Bertrand Russell fellow told in *Forward* of someone who met some Russian soldiers who talked about Moscow's subway and they thought it was the only subway in the world. They didn't know there was a subway in London or in New York. My, oh, my! Mr. Russell felt like shedding tears. "Imagine," says he, "nobody in Russia except the few at the top knew we had a subway in London." Will you shed a tear with Mr. Russell? Now I believe it's possible that a soldier in the Red Army, drawn from some of the far-away Republics, might not have heard of London's tubes. Nay, it may even be possible to get one that hadn't heard of Moscow's subway. I wouldn't like to bet on it either way. But I am absolutely positive there's a whole lot of people in England, aye, and in Scotland, who don't know we have a subway in Glasgow. I wonder if Mr. Russell knows? What does that prove? It doesn't prove anything. Now I'll tell a better one than Russell's and it has the advantage of being true. A very good comrade of mine left Scotland for a holiday in England at the beginning of September, this year, 1945. He is a naturalised British subject and he spent a few days with a couple of compatriots, also naturalised. They wanted to pass the time playing cards. My friend didn't want to play cards, he wanted to talk politics. "Never mind politics," the older one said, "play cards. Let Lloyd George talk politics, that's his business." My friend said to me in a tone of utter disgust, "They didn't know that Lloyd George was dead. They thought he was still Prime Minister." How's that, Mr. Russell? Would I be entitled to say on the strength of it, that naturalised Britishers, with the exception of a few on top, don't know that we have a Labour Government, with Attlee as Prime Minister?

I happened to be in Moscow when the Underground was started. In every factory, in every trade union they were discussing it, because all of the workers producing material for it, were working to a plan. In many cases they were able to make a considerable cut in the time originally scheduled. In these discussions, they had all the information regarding labour, material and time taken in similar undertakings in Germany, France, Britain and America. Time and again I was asked questions about London's Tubes and what I thought about the projected Moscow Tubes, how they would compare with London. What a travesty of intelligence this man Russell displays, when he tries to get people to believe, that engineers, say, in any country, don't know what is going on in other countries. "Free" press. What a joke. Here is something that can be tested, that can be put to the proof. We have a "free" press. Have we? We have an Embassy in Moscow, none of whom have ever been specially distinguished as pioneers of human progress.

This Embassy makes regular reports to the Foreign Office. Along with the Embassy, press representatives of all the principal papers. They also send regular reports to this country, the country with the "free" press. Yet, so strictly is our "free" press controlled, when the Nazis made their treacherous onslaught on the Soviet Union on June 21, 1941, nobody in this country, outside of readers of the *Daily Worker*, not even the few at the top, knew anything whatever about the strength or the power of resistance of the Soviet

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Union. Not even Churchill or the members of his Cabinet had any idea of what the Red Army and the Soviet people were capable of achieving. "Three weeks and it will be all over." That was the opinion of our military "experts." That was the dismal feeling in the House of Commons. Our Embassy and our "free" press had piled up lies on the top of lies and anyone who tried to convey anything that approximated to the truth could find little opportunity in any of the popular papers. At the time of the Finnish war, self-deception was carried to an amazing height—or depth. Here was a great military undertaking. An attack on a well-prepared, well-defended strategic line, in the dead of winter. Yet in two, or three months, the well-constructed miles of the Mannerheim line, were blown to smithereens and the war was over. No other nation in the world could have done it. But did we learn anything from that outstanding military feat? Not a thing. Our "free" press gave us nothing but lies and slanders of the most disgusting character. A deputation from the labour movement went to Finland to see the situation for themselves. Citrine, Noel-Baker and a representative of the Co-ops. They saw Mannerheim and his fascist colleague Tanner. They told them all about the Red Army. They even produced some wretched Finnish peasants, dressed up in bits of Red Army uniforms and introduced them as Red Army prisoners of war. When they came back Noel-Baker made a report to the Parliamentary Labour Party. It almost broke his heart to give it, but he had to be honest, he'd tell the truth though the heavens fell. The men of the Red Army, said he, are poor, poor specimens, half-starved, ill-clad, no decent equipment, and no boots. That was the gist of his story. And Noel-Baker is really an honest fellow, but he had swallowed Mannerheim's lies whole-sale, because they were in keeping with what he had already been reading each day in our "free" press.

When the Germans were driving towards Moscow, Members of Parliament were anxiously watching the tape. They had the feeling that when the Nazis finished with the Red Army they would possess the whole of Europe and could then deal with Britain at their leisure. It wasn't a comfortable thought. I was then in great demand. The few at the top wanted to know something about Russia. Day after day they were at me. Again David Kirkwood or Alex Sloan will testify, if need be. "Tell me this," "Tell me that." Question after question. "Is the Red Army well equipped? What sort of man is Stalin? Have they got sufficient industry to keep the Army supplied? How strong is the Air Force? Will the people of Russia stand up to it?" These and others were put to me by members of all parties. All anxious to know the truth. Our "free" press had not only kept them in ignorance, much worse, it had filled their heads with rubbish taken from the European sewers. Unfortunately some of the rubbish came from the British Embassy in Moscow.

One day I was speaking to Sydney Silverman, when who should come over but Noel-Baker. He was greatly disturbed. The Germans were at the gates of Moscow. But as the force of their offensive had weakened it ought to have been obvious that they would never break through to Moscow. "Hello, Willie," said Noel, "do you think Moscow will hold out?" Sure it will," I replied, "there's no fear of Moscow." "You think the Red Army will hold them?" was his next. "What do you think they're doing?" I exclaimed. "Oh," he said, with a touch of fervour, "I think they're magnificent." "Yes," I said, "and without boots." He had the grace to blush. Soon after this the Ministry o

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information sent out a few lecturers, with lantern slides, to lecture on the Soviet Union. For the first time our people got to see a little of what life was like in the Soviet Union. At these meetings it was a commonplace to hear men and women say, "Why haven't they told us the truth before?" Because the press of this country doesn't exist to tell the truth. It exists under the control of the capitalists to defend and maintain the capitalists. Time and again it had lied about and slandered the miners, the railwaymen, the engineers and all other sections of the workers, when they have been on the streets fighting for existence. If it will lie about and slander the workers at home, what will it not do about the workers of other countries, who seek to free themselves from the power of the exploiters. There's over forty million people in this country. The great daily papers are owned and controlled by a handful of capitalists. That has nothing in common with democracy. Only when the people themselves, as in the Soviet Union, control the press, only then will it be free, only then will it be democratic.

* * *

So I could go on. I have already referred to industry, where the masses of people spend the greatest part of their working life and where democracy is conspicuously lacking. Then take such powerful and influential institutions as the Church, particularly in the country areas; the Radio and the Cinema. What democratic control is there in these? None whatever. "Bourgeois Democracy," as Lenin so often said, is limited, very, very limited and cannot by any means be presented as a standard for our progressive people.

A Constituent Assembly for India

by MICHAEL CARRITT

DURING the course of the war there was sharp criticism in America and other Allied countries concerning British policy in India as it affected the war effort. The imprisonment of the Indian leaders, the violent police repression and the stubborn adherence to a policy of deadlock seemed calculated more to crush the national movement than to mobilise India and Indian resources against Japan.

In the economic field bureaucratic rule was exposed as crudely corrupt and inefficient. Fantastic inflation, soaring prices and a prosperous black market went unchecked. In close political alliance with the hoarders and the black market, the Government was either unwilling or unable to introduce ng and price control in time to it a devastating famine that has idia weakened and destitute.

Every effort was made by official propaganda to discredit the Indian leaders as pro-Japanese and to throw the blame for the famine onto Indian shoulders. But neither in America nor in Britain was the public gulled. An impressive volume of support was won for the demand for the release of the leaders and for the formation of a temporary National Government which would have been sufficiently representative and responsible to have roused India's millions for a national war effort; which would have developed India's resources as part of the war potential; and which would have had popular support for all measures necessary to cope with the food situation.

Now, with the end of the war and the liberation of the Far East from Japanese occupation, the settlement of India's future is even more emphati-

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cally a matter of international concern. Neither peace nor prosperity can come to the Far East, nor to the world as a whole, so long as India is an unwilling dependency, the development of whose national economy is frustrated by foreign vested interests.

The election of a Labour Government with an overwhelming majority creates a new situation and new opportunities for a lasting solution of the Indian "problem." Tory policy on India (along with its chief exponent, Mr. Amery) has been decisively rejected. The labour movement, whose Government is now in power, stands unambiguously committed by its own resolutions to a democratic solution of the political deadlock with India. An enormous responsibility, therefore, rests upon the Labour Government and the British people; but also an unprecedented opportunity opens out for shouldering that responsibility.

The solution now required must be a democratic one and a lasting one. No makeshift provisional settlement will fit the bill. *And in such a settlement the central issue is the demand for a genuinely democratic Constituent Assembly which will enable India freely to frame her own constitution in a way that is compatible with her national aspirations and her claim to sovereignty.*

Unfortunately the proposals made by Mr. Attlee on September 19 are not of this character and in India they have not met with any enthusiastic welcome. Based upon the proposals made by Cripps in the entirely different international situation of 1942 and then rejected by all Indian parties, the Government plan represents neither a decisive break with the policies of the National Government nor an imaginative attempt to seize the opportunities afforded by Labour's popular victory. They do not succeed in suggesting the machinery by which India could freely and democratically proceed to frame her own constitution. The proposals are hesitant and vague, and the most that can be said for them is that they do not entirely close the door to alternative suggestions for better and more democratic machinery for the proposed "constitution - making" body.

Consequently, an urgent responsibility falls upon the British people, to press in every possible way for new proposals which will contain a Constituent Assembly which is really acceptable to Indians as a practical means deciding their own future.

Such a Constituent Assembly must conform to the following requirements.

(1) *It must be elected by adult franchise.* Even if, in order to avoid delay, the coming provincial elections are to be held on the present narrowly restricted franchise, there is no reason why new electoral lists should not be put into preparation at once for the Constituent Assembly.

(2) *Election must be direct.* The proposal to use the Provincial Assemblies as electoral colleges would result, not in securing a reflection of the will of the people, but in producing a complicated balance of different vested interests.

(3) *Election of representatives from the Indian States must be no less democratic than in the provinces of British India.* The undemocratic anachronism of the feudal Princes nominating representatives must be eliminated once and for all.

(4) *The Assembly must be a real Constituent Assembly and not just a "constitution-making body" whose job is to make recommendations for the British Government to reject or modify.* One of the responsibilities of a sovereign Constituent Assembly would be freely to enter into a Treaty with Britain. At present there is a deepseated fear in India lest, during the period prior to the establishment of a new constitution, economic or fiscal deci-

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sions may be taken, or embodied in a Treaty, which would seriously prejudice India's future economic independence. Current suggestions in the British Press that India's sterling balances may have to be repudiated or scaled down serve to show how far these fears are justified.

In the meantime, and until the Constituent Assembly is convened, something more has to be done to break the political deadlock than is at present proposed by the Government. The provincial elections must go forward . . . but they must be free elections. And that is only possible, if, as a start, all political prisoners, whether convicted in a Court of Law or detained without trial, are released. All bans on meetings, on the movement and association of individuals and restrictions on the Press must be withdrawn. What justification is there for us in Britain to be less emphatic in our insistence on an atmosphere of democracy and freedom for elections in India than we are for certain central European countries?

Further, it is of vital importance, as experience in Europe shows, that during the critical pre-election period provisional popular governments, both in the provinces and at the Centre, should control the administration. There is no ground for confidence that the bureaucracy in India, steeped in a tradition of repression and contempt for political parties, is competent either fairly to supervise the checking of the electoral lists or, in the light of past experience, to cope with the grave threat of renewed famine and inflation in this coming winter. It is only *after* the elections that it is proposed (and that, too, in the vaguest possible terms) to reconstitute the Viceroy's Executive Council "*with the support of the main parties*?" This is simply to shelve the crucial problem of procedure without showing how far the new Council is representative or responsible. In the meantime it leaves the deadlock unsolved in a rapidly deteriorating political situation.

Clearly the basis for forming a temporary National Government at the Centre will have to be found in a return to the formula of Congress-Moslem League parity which was agreed upon by the two parliamentary leaders (the Desai-Liaquat agreement) and unofficially approved by Gandhi.

One appreciates the cunning with which Mr. Amery, on the eve of his departure from office, bedevilled the issues at stake and threw a spanner in the works of growing Congress-League unity. By substituting the provocative formula of Hindu-Moslem parity he laid the basis for the breakdown of the Simla talks. Both Congress and Moslem League leaders fell headlong into the trap. They accepted the new formula and abandoned the basis of their own agreement. Instead of a joint front to press unitedly for India's demands, both parties sought to win the Viceroy as a champion of their *own* case with the result that the initiative was left with the bureaucracy. Today the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that the leaders on both sides, to judge from their public statements, seem intent upon provoking a disastrous internecine conflict.

Nobody but the imperialists can benefit from these recent developments in India. It is the result of a policy they have consistently promoted and it is the legacy they have skilfully bequeathed to the Labour Government. On their behalf the bureaucracy in India, steeped in an anti-democratic tradition, will faithfully continue to carry out this policy. In such a situation it is disastrous if the Government's plan be no more than a politely worded continuation of its predecessor's policies. If the Attlee-Wavell proposals are allowed to stand as our last word on Indian affairs the future is beset with dangers of the first magnitude. The Indian parties, frustrated,

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embittered and without the power to tackle their own domestic problems, will be driven along the barren road of communal dissension, whilst, in this country, the Press will continue to wash its hands of a deadlock which it claims to be of Indian concern only.

It is perfectly true that the satisfaction of the demands of the minorities and a settlement of the issue of Pakistan are matters which must be solved by Indians themselves, but so far from holding up political and constitutional progress until agreement is reached, the fact is that a solution can *only* be reached in an atmosphere of democracy and freedom, and when there is no longer any Viceroy to lend a ready ear to the sectarian axe-grinding of various groups and vested interests.

In this difficult situation the Communist Party of India has striven in the forefront to achieve national unity in India, and to persuade the two main national organisations, the Congress and the Moslem League, to reach agreement as to the way in which the desire of Moslems for self-determination can be satisfied.

An unfortunate measure of the disunity and sense of frustration that today prevails in India owing to continued repression is the campaign of abuse and heresy-hunting now being developed by the Congress leadership against Communists on the grounds of their opposition to the wave of "struggle" and sabotage which was provoked by the Government in 1942.

Once again, nobody but the imperialist will stand to gain from this disunity within the national movement of India. And the responsibility rests all the more heavily upon the Labour Government to cut away sharply from the policies that have led to this situation of disunity and frustration. A really democratic Constituent Assembly, convened on the lines already suggested, would guarantee to the working masses of India a voice in the determination of their own future that would ensure their protection from exploitation by Indian as well as foreign vested interests. It would, moreover, convey to the world that the British people's interest in democracy is a genuine interest and not just a smoke-screen behind which to cast aspersions upon the new freedom which the peoples of Central Europe and the Balkans have won.

The British Universities

by ROY PASCAL

THE British universities, being outside the sphere of the Ministry of Education, have escaped the public investigation and overhaul which most of our educational institutions underwent during the preliminaries to the passing of the Education Act. They are all self-governing and independent bodies, linked to the Government only through the University Grants Committee, a committee of the Treasury, whose charge is essentially a financial one.

The Government's attitude to the universities has undergone what has been well described as a "revolutionary change", and as an earnest of future action the Treasury grant, hitherto forming about one-third of the income of the universities, has been doubled as from October, 1945, and a promise of many millions of pounds for long-term capital development was made by Sir John Anderson when he was Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The main principles guiding the impending financial expansion may be summed up as:—

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1. The provision of large funds for new buildings, laboratories, equipment, over a long period. Hitherto, strange as it may seem, the funds for capital development have come almost exclusively from private endowment and the individual initiative of universities;

2. Additional income for improvement of salaries, increase of teaching and research staff, so that the people needed may be attracted to, and kept at the universities;

3. A first step towards the co-ordination and rationalisation of research, by encouraging certain universities to undertake certain types of research or to found particular specialised departments, through the grant of funds for this purpose. There is, however, little sign of any very vigorous planned initiative coming from the U.G.C., and the latter is not large enough in personnel to do this, including only about twelve to fifteen experts;

4. The preservation of the autonomy of the universities within this framework, so that essentially all initiative must come from the universities themselves. The U.G.C. can influence inertia only by withholding or promising additional grants.

One might mention in addition the trend to increase the size and number of scholarship grants to students, which has been furthered by the Ministry of Education; and the fairly generous grants awarded to intending students on demobilisation.

The main source of the impetus noted above is, without doubt, the appreciation by the Government of the immense value of the universities' contribution to the war effort, and the potential value of their contribution to industry in the struggle for markets henceforth. Industrialists like Sir Ernest Simon have pointed out very forcibly the advantages accruing to American industry from American investment in science; and modern warfare has shown, too, how the country needs a very large contingent of scientifically-trained men and women at all levels. This social need is likely to satisfy in large part the demand for "equal rights" in education.

A particularly large grant of £1,500,000 for the development of our medical schools indicates, however, another purpose—concern for the health of the people—and the overdue establishment of chairs of industrial medicine is an important pointer. The future increase in the number of university teachers is intended to provide for better, and in particular, more personal tuition, an expression of the appreciation of the need for an education which aims at developing the personality of the student, not merely at cramming him with knowledge. The additional grants from the Ministry of Education for adult education, for which the universities are one of the responsible bodies, and which is already profiting by an increase in the number of tutors, indicates the same wide aim. There is thus a real movement in university education. What is lacking?

There is far too little stress in all plans of development on the need for the development of this side of education. It is not a question of the (ridiculously named) Arts* versus the Sciences. It is a question of informing all branches of study with consciousness of their social relevance and purpose, and of participating fully in the control of their uses. The Arts can no longer, as some departments have done, limit themselves to the development of culture in the abstract, the appreciation of poetry, knowledge of some particular period of the past, of some language or other. The sciences

* In the returns of the University Grants Committee, "Arts" includes, besides Classics, Modern Languages, and History, etc., also Law, Economics, Commerce, Sociology, Education and Theology.

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cannot merely turn out excellent physicists or chemists. All the specialised studies are, of course, necessary; but each one must cultivate also the consciousness of the social context of the study, and of the social environment in which we are working.

* * *

When we drop from the realm of general principle to that of actuality, numerous problems come to light.

1. In 1938-9 the number of full-time students at the British universities working for a first degree was 39,229, with 7,679 others working for a diploma of some sort. It is now generally agreed that this number should be substantially raised, partly to provide a better trained population, partly a better educated population (a purpose which can be fulfilled only by a reform of the curriculum so that it serves the needs of wider types of employment than hitherto). An increase of 50 per cent. has authoritative backing, and will probably be sought.* It is advisable that this increase should go, in the main, to the modern universities and university colleges. These are considerably smaller than Oxford and Cambridge (with the exception of London), and their organisation easily allows for a considerable expansion of students and staff; indeed, they (perhaps London should be excepted) would profit greatly by being enlarged.

2. The question of the social composition of the student population is most important, and figures have been provided by the University Grants Committee only since 1937-8. Students who had earlier attended a public elementary school (not all of these are of working-class origin) formed in 1938-9 38.6 per cent. of the total in the English universities, 92 per cent. in the Welsh, 65.7 per cent. in the Scottish. These are extraordinarily interesting figures. But if we analyse the English figures, further interesting details come to light. The proportion of such students entering in 1938 at Cambridge was under one-fifth, at Oxford, under one-quarter; at Birmingham about one-half, at London somewhat under one-third (to take particular examples of modern universities).* Even compared with Scotland and Wales, we can see that the share of the working-class in university education in England is extremely small, while Oxford and Cambridge remain above all upper-class territory, to which only the intellectual cream of elementary-school products is admitted. Two things emerge: as long as this state of things continues, university education must still be stigmatised as essentially a privilege of the better-off sections of the population; and Oxford and Cambridge remain distinct from the rest in the predominance of the middle-class. The results of the recent elections in the university constituencies are thus understandable; and the present social composition of the universities threatens to affirm an antagonism between the people at large and the university-trained class, such as obtained during the Weimar Republic in Germany.

3. The total income of the British universities has been something over £6 million, of which just over one-third came from the Treasury. To meet the great programme of expansion envisaged by the University Grants Committee, it is clear that the main part of the new finance must be provided by the state, however much private benefaction or local authorities may do. The late Government recognised its obligation in this re-

* The proportion of students in the whole population is lower in England and Wales than in almost any other advanced country; an addition of 50% would raise us only slightly in the scale.

* The figures refer only to students domiciled in the British Isles, and do not include students from other parts.

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spect, and the Treasury Grant for the forthcoming session will be doubled, a further increase being contemplated in two years' time.

This increase was hailed, when it was announced, as solving the immediate problems of the universities. It does not do so. Many of the universities have been forced, during the war, to over-commit themselves, largely through increases of salary; a large part of the additional grant must be expended on salaries; and such expansion of staff as can take place can only keep pace with the increase in the number of students, already marked. This increase of £2 millions will help only in a small degree in our essential tasks of founding new departments of research and teaching; expanding the staff in already existing departments; re-equipping departments whose laboratories are in some cases forty years out of date; stocking our libraries so that some of the hindrances to research are overcome, etc. In addition, as I have indicated above, there is at present no indication that the Government is intending to establish a system of maintenance grants so that all those who can profit by a university education may be ensured the financial means to study. It is to be hoped that the Labour Government, which has inherited from its predecessor an enlightened university policy, will realise how necessary it is to go beyond these first timid steps, and to press forward boldly with a plan of financial assistance.

The raising of the school-age, and the raising of the secondary (Modern) schools to the level of the secondary (Grammar) schools, call for a large increase in numbers of teachers, and also an improvement in quality. It is therefore to be expected that a considerable number of the teachers of the Modern schools will have had a university education. At present, however, the specialist honours degree courses are hardly suitable for many of the purposes of these schools. It will, therefore, be necessary to carry through a very considerable reorganisation of degree courses, so as to provide better general courses of high academic standing than are usually available. For many other professions, a general course is more educative and more useful, and it must be one of the main internal tasks of our universities to meet this need. This is the best way in which they will be able to contribute, in the immediate future, to the provision of the teachers the Act needs.

The great expansion of the universities, as outlined above, must be subject to some sort of plan, some idea, defined somewhere, of the numbers of students, the types of research and their allocation, of the departments needed, etc. Many rare studies are not needed at all universities, while at the same time certain branches of research should not be overlooked by the universities. It will be advisable to build up certain universities or university colleges, both in teaching and research. At present the University Grants Committee is the only body capable of making decisions on these matters, and it is not large enough, not sufficiently a public body, to do so satisfactorily, even if it wished to. It is a matter of urgency that the universities should form, voluntarily, a representative Council, which could, through expert committees, thoroughly examine all the questions which need a common policy and agreement, and could advise the universities and the Government on these matters. It is probably advisable, too, that there should be some channel of approach to the Government other than through the Exchequer, for one cannot always expect the Chancellor to be the best person to understand and respond to university policy! If the universities can voluntarily take steps in this direction, they will justify their

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autonomy; if there is no co-ordinating body established, they will justify a demand for direct ministerial control, or slide into a state of slovenliness which Britain cannot afford.

But there is another side to this university co-operation. The governments of the United Nations are shortly going to discuss proposals for international intellectual co-operation, and for some years discussions have been proceeding among university men of the allied nations concerning the establishment of an international association of university teachers. It is not necessary to stress the extreme importance of these proposals, nor the potential value of the contribution the universities may make. But, with all the good will in the world, there are immense difficulties in the way, arising from the lack of administrative links between our universities. Our Minister for Education cannot speak on behalf of our universities; and there is no one else to do so. It is not sufficient that the professional Association of University Teachers should play its part in whatever organisation is set up; the universities themselves ought to participate, so that decisions reached in consultation with foreign universities can be operated by responsible institutions here. Again, therefore, the need is urgent for the creation of an inter-university representative council; if it is not instituted, it would be necessary to urge the Government to take direct responsibility, for international intellectual co-operation and exchange is not an amiable ideal, but an immediate necessity.

In this article I have emphasised as far as possible those aspects of university development which have a public aspect and which demand public interest; there are, of course, many other internal problems, and all the above-mentioned proposals need corresponding alterations within the universities, of organisation, curriculum and method. Since the universities have a democratic internal organisation, the machinery is there for carrying through such changes, and there is no point in enlarging upon them here. It is necessary, however, that the wider public should be more conversant with the achievements and problems of our universities, should criticise, and should insist that they receive the funds they need for the productive functions they fulfil.

Germany

by PETER FIELD

MORE than half a year has passed since the unconditional surrender of Hitlerite Germany; more than a quarter of a year since the Potsdam meeting. It is necessary to take stock of what has happened in Germany since the end of hostilities. For the development of the German situation is a measuring gauge of progress towards real peace and reconstruction.

The three chief powers at the Conference of Berlin agreed upon a series of decisions with regard to the future of Germany.

The main agencies responsible for the work to be done are two: on the one hand, the Allied Control Council with four control commissions in four zones; on the other hand, the whole German people. The increasing share of the German people in this common task is also a measuring gauge.

De-Nazification and Demilitarisation

The whole German people has been poisoned by fascism. Apart from a very large number of war criminals, the greater part of the German people had followed the lead of the fascists in the "good days" of wholesale plunder

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and oppression of the peoples of Europe, as well as in the "bad days," when the fascists fought "to the last" on German soil. The task of denazification consists in the elimination of the war criminals, big and small ones, and in the education of the broad masses of the German people for democracy. The former is a short-term job, the latter will take time.

Considerable progress has been made during the last half year. The members of the Hitler-Government, as well as a number of prominent industrial warmongers and military leaders await trial before a tribunal of the United Nations.

Tens of thousands of other fascists have been eliminated from positions of influence, and many of them are in jail. Progress has been greatest in the Soviet zone. Here the whole Junker class has been expropriated and deprived of their influence. These elements were, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the protagonists of feudalism; until the beginning of the twentieth century semi-feudal barons and militarists; after 1918 they became one of the main bases of German fascism. Nor do we find in the Soviet zone trust magnates and monopolists—the second main basis of militarism and fascism in Germany.

In the British, French and American zones progress has been slower and the role of the big landowners and trust magnates in Germany has obviously not been understood. In general, they are arrested or deprived of their position only if they had a high official rank in the Nazi hierarchy or a high position in the state economic hierarchy, such as head of a Wirtschaftsgruppe (industrial group); or if they openly sabotage orders of the Control Commission, as in the case of the Ruhr coal syndicate. But elimination of fascism and militarism means more than to pick certain trust magnates and big landowners as particularly ardent fascists. It means, on the contrary, picking out those few who have demonstrated by action their anti-fascist attitude, and relegating the rest to a position without influence.

These are the persons who were mainly responsible for the fascist crimes because they supported fascism before 1933, because they took the major part of the spoils of the war, and because they will again try to nazify and militarise Germany as soon as opportunity arises. The security of the world as well as the future of Germany make their removal from their present positions an urgent necessity.

Such action may have to be preceded by an overhaul of the control machinery. It took over four months to discover that General Patton is unable to distinguish between the political system in the United States and in fascist Germany. There are a number of smaller Pattons also in our zone.

Some, following Mr. Churchill, talk glibly of an "iron curtain" between the Soviet zone and the Western zones in Germany. Certainly, on the British side, there are quite a number of curtain makers, who, by keeping fascists in office for the sake of "efficiency and continuity," are actually trying to separate Germany into two sections: the one from which fascism is being eliminated and the other where it is being cloaked in respectable garments.

Democratisation

Given the necessary military power and a good corps of security agents, any power can eliminate the 1,000, or even 100,000 top fascists and militarists. But the task in Germany is not only the elimination of the top men. Fascism is to be rooted out completely, and real democracy is to take its place. That can be accomplished only through the German people. Therefore, the processes of complete rooting out of fascism and militarism in Germany and the democratisation of German life are only two sides of the same

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development. Fully realising this, the Allies at Potsdam decided to admit the formation of political parties and trade unions all over Germany. These organisations are to take an active part in the fight against militarism and fascism, and by doing so, they perform a highly important part of the work of democratisation of Germany. In the Soviet zone, for instance, village committees direct the expropriation of the land. Trade unions begin to be the driving force in the elimination of fascists in the factories. Town and city committees, under the guidance of the block of the four united parties Christian Democrats, Liberal Democrats, Social Democrats and Communists) are watching over the administration and organisation activities locally. German courts have begun the trial of the smaller, but not less fiendish fascist criminals. That is democracy in the working !

In the American and British zones, parties and trade unions also have begun to be active. But in many cases they are active apart from the economic and political administration of the country. They are not allowed by the control commissions to form a real part of the work of reconstruction and democratisation—even where they are not snubbed and hindered. When fascists are eliminated from their positions, they are usually replaced by hand-picked men, recommended by this or that person who is regarded as reliable because he was in office under the Weimar republic. Neither the trade unions nor the political parties are, as a rule, consulted. There is, therefore, no connecting link yet between the process of the elimination of fascists and the democratic development of the masses of the people. As a consequence, we find today in many cities in place of the fascist the Weimar hierarchy. These men, old men usually, very old men often, are undoubtedly opposed to fascism which, after all, threw them out. But they are part of a system which let fascism come to power. They usually have little contact with the masses of the people, as mostly they had remained passive during the years of the Hitler government, and they are lacking the qualities of political courage, initiative and burning love for democracy which are needed today. Thus, the work of the Western control commissions is not done well: they impose sorry figures of the past upon a people which is being asked to break with the crimes, as well as with the weaknesses of the past. Nobody expects a control commission or military government to produce good German democrats. Nor does one expect them to be able to pick such Germans on the basis of conversations with some respectable man of Weimar. But experience in the Eastern zone shows that there are sufficient German anti-fascists to fill the positions in business and administration. And the same experience shows that the way to find them is to go to the trade unions and to the political parties who know the people because they are of the people.

Economic Reconstruction

The Potsdam declaration envisages Germany's economic future as that of a country with agriculture as a major branch of the national economy, and largely domestic industries, peaceful industries, making up the rest of the national economy. That is a complete break with the development of the last hundred years.

The "pastoralisation" of Germany, the development towards agriculture as a major industry of the country, has been regarded in many circles as a retrograde step. This it would be if we have in mind agriculture in Germany up to 1945, in Britain or in the South of the United States. But Denmark, Australia and, above all, the Soviet Union, have shown that agriculture can be a highly progressive industry—

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if it is managed in a democratic and scientific way. Everything depends upon the mode of production in the future Germany. Here again we find the greatest progress is in the Soviet zone. There are no collective farms to be found. No "Sovietisation" of German agriculture has taken place. Yet there is no doubt that conditions have been revolutionised. The large estates have been expropriated. Village committees have taken over the distribution of the land. Scientific work is purposefully directed towards the study of agricultural problems. The agricultural implements industry is being restarted. The daily press is full of articles dealing with agricultural questions. The whole process of democracy is put into motion to master the problem of agriculture. The elimination of the large landowners, is at the same time necessary in order to create an economic basis for a true democracy, necessary for the creation of a peaceful German economy.

Naturally, without the crushing of the fascist armies by the Red Army such a reorganisation of German agrarian economy could not have taken place. Naturally, the Soviet control commission watches carefully over the reorganisation which is taking place. But the decrees instituting this democratic revolution are German decrees; and the process of distribution of the land is taking place on the basis of decisions of democratic meetings of the German peasants and agricultural workers.

What is the situation in the Western zones? Productive capacity is enormous. Bombing has caused relatively little damage to the iron and steel industry, to the I.G. Farben works and most other plants. Some of these plants are now being dismantled because their machinery is valuable to the corresponding concerns in the United States and in Britain. The majority of the plants stand idle. However, there seems to be a tendency to rebuild German heavy industry.

True, the working of the German mines is necessary because coal is needed in Germany herself, whatever her economic structure, and the adjacent countries are in urgent need of German coal. But it seems that influential people begin to regard the Ruhr basin in the same way as the Allies regarded food imports into Germany after the last war: as a means of political pressure. This time pressure is to be put, not upon the Germans, where it is not needed, but upon France, Belgium and Holland, that is, the possible members of the Western bloc which is so ardently desired by these very same circles.

While coal undoubtedly is needed by these countries, and German mines cannot be transferred to other countries, large parts of the German steel industry can be transferred to other countries. There is not the slightest need for German steel production to the amount that can be produced by the undamaged or relatively little damaged German Ruhr steel plants. On the contrary, the maintenance of such an industry, consisting of large corporations, under the control of Britain, with many of the German supporters of fascism at the helm, used as a means of pressure upon the continental countries in the West, would be conducive neither to the democratic process in Germany nor to the establishment of world peace on a secure basis.

These two examples of the handling of the agrarian question in the Eastern zone and of the Ruhr question in the Western zone show clearly the difference between a democratic and progressive procedure in regard to the questions of German economy and the old economic power game of imperialist countries, which has brought so much misery over the world.

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